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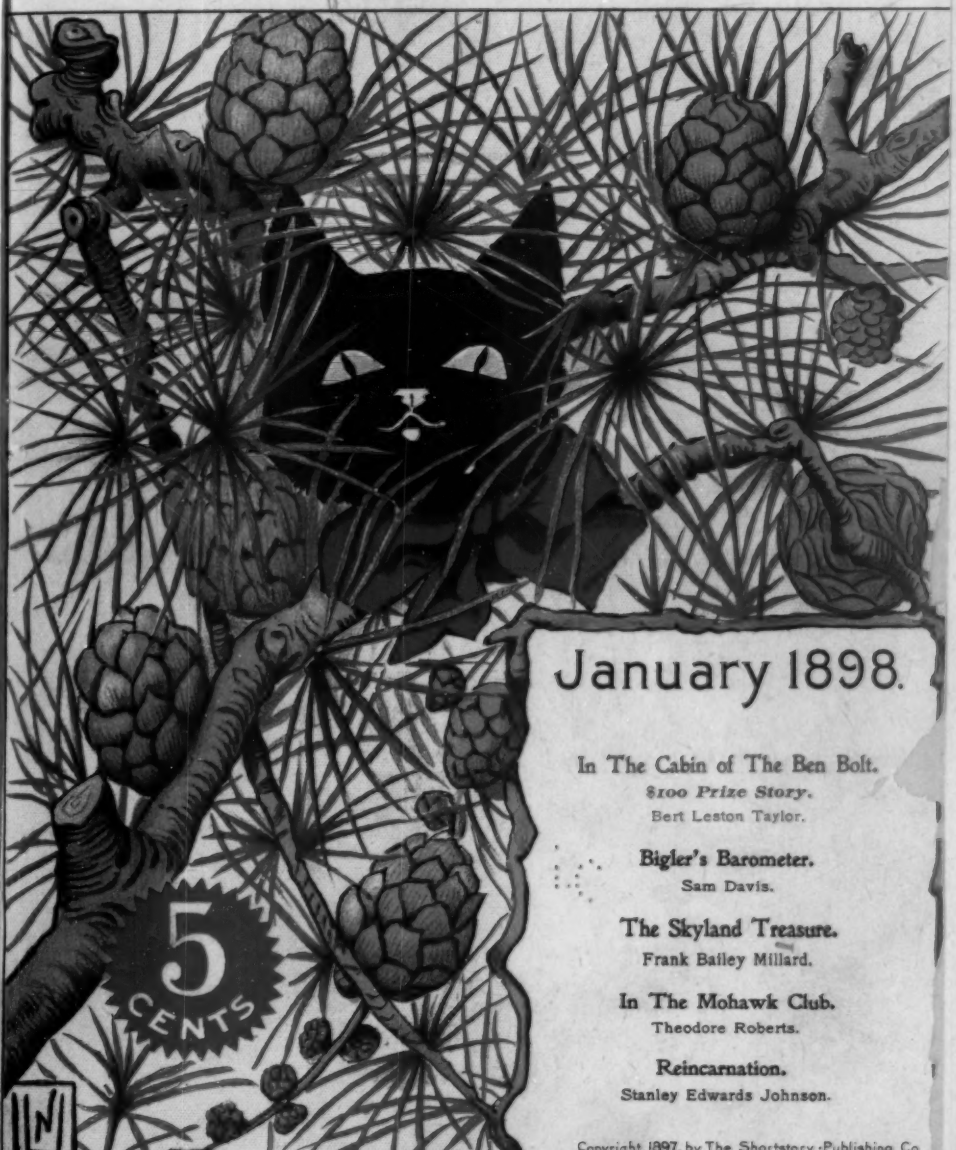
The Black Cat



January 1898.

In The Cabin of The Ben Bolt.
$100 Prize Story.
Bert Leston Taylor.

Bigler's Barometer.
Sam Davis.

The Skyland Treasure.
Frank Bailey Millard.

In The Mohawk Club.
Theodore Roberts.

Reincarnation.
Stanley Edwards Johnson.

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Holiday rhymes That hold workaday reason

MONDAY **S** is for Sarah, so slight but so grand,

TUESDAY **A** is for Ada, first star in our land,

WEDNESDAY **P** for Paderewski, plays pianos for gold

THURSDAY **O** for Otero, the dancer so bold,

FRIDAY **L** stands for Lillian, America's pride

SATURDAY **I** stands for Irving, who walks with a stride

SUNDAY **O** stands for Others, who sing as they go

Because they earned rest with SAPOLIO

USED EVERY **WEEK-DAY** BRINGS REST ON **SUNDAY**

Bring holiday season
In workaday times.

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The Black Cat

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In the Cabin of the Ben Bolt.*

BY BERT LESTON TAYLOR.

THE whaling bark *Ben Bolt*, of Fairhaven, Mass., had put into the quaint old port of Russell, on the northeast coast of New Zealand, to take on supplies of wood, water, and provisions, and to give the crew a run ashore. On Saturday, the 23d of December, the bark waited only the turn of the tide and the pleasure of her commander, who was as like to square away for Fairhaven as for any other point on the world's map. We had been out a twelvemonth; the one whale to our credit had, in the killing, smashed one of the boats and disabled a brace of the crew, and Captain Mayhew's temper, never the best, grew steadily worse as the profitless days slipped by.

As the skipper, with the narrator of this tale following at his heels in discreet silence, stalked through the streets of Russell towards the consul's office, to answer charges of ill usage filed by two of the crew, he was in a particularly bad humor. Moreover, it being early in the forenoon, he was sober; and to Captain Mayhew sobriety brought increase of irritability.

As we entered the anteroom to the consul's office a lady rose from a seat by the window and, stepping up to the captain, asked him, in a voice so sweet and musical that it brought him up all

*This story received a fifth prize of $100 in THE BLACK CAT prize competition, which closed March 31, 1897.

standing, whether she might have a word with him. The skipper clawed off his cap, and the lady, who was young, and, to my mind, very handsome, took him by the arm and drew him to a spot well out of earshot. Fragments of the conversation reached me, but I paid little heed to them. I was staring hard at the winsome face of the young lady, who seemingly was striving to convince the captain of some proposition not vastly to his fancy. As the argument grew, the lady's face took on a beseeching expression and her voice a tone of earnest pleading. I caught the phrase, "One hundred pounds," and this appeared to sway the debate materially, for the captain ceased to shake his head, and began to pace a few steps to and fro, while the young lady awaited the decision in plain anxiety. Presently the skipper signed for me to draw near.

"Dick," said he in an undertone, "take a shore boat and row this lady out to the bark. Any traps, Miss?" turning to the lady.

"A few," said she. "I will have them sent down from the hotel."

"Dick will look after them," said the captain, with unwonted graciousness, and went about his business.

I have made many voyages since the one with which, in part, this story deals; I have wandered in strange lands, and seen many types of fair women, but I have never looked upon another such face as that which drew my eyes, as a magnet draws steel, as I pulled away from the stone pier at Russell for the trip across the bay.

She was, I judged, twenty-five years old; very tall,— perhaps five feet seven inches,— large, and finely proportioned. I am drawing her portrait, not from the hasty sketch that my eyes made during the passage to the *Ben Bolt*, but from the leisure pencilings for which the after days afforded opportunity.

Her skin was very dark, but unblemished. Her eyes were black and rather small, and because of a very high forehead, appeared to be set midway of her face. It was this peculiarity that gave to the face its strong individuality. Her eyebrows were heavy and straight, with no inclination for meeting, and her nose, the least perfect of her features, was a trifle broad and a bit inclined

to "pug." She had a large mouth and full, red lips, and her teeth were small, separated, and perfectly cut as so many gems. A delicately rounded chin, graduating into the curves of a fine neck and shoulders, and black, fluffy hair, parted with a few becoming ringlets, completed this unconventional portrait. I have been at some pains to draw it; for, as you may guess, my interest in it was more than passing. Evelyth Annerly was her name. There was music in every syllable; music, to my young and romantic fancy, sweeter than the murmur of the night breeze through the shrouds, or the surge of the bow-parted waves.

My passenger seemed to be wholly occupied with her thoughts, which crossed the smoothest of brows with two faint lines. But she must at last have grown conscious of my impertinent scrutiny, for she turned from her absent contemplation of the sea with the query: —

"Well, Mr. Dick, am I satisfactory?"

I felt my face color up, and, too confused to turn the question, I fixed my eyes upon the bottom of the boat and tugged violently at the oars.

"I am in no hurry to reach the bark," said she, with a low, rippling laugh that is in my ears to this day. "I suppose you think it odd that your vessel should have such a passenger," she went on, as, being rid of my embarrassment, I again raised my eyes.

"It was in my mind, Miss," said I, "that the cabin of a whaler was hardly suited to a lady —"

"That has no other choice," she finished, with a smile. "And, pray, how comes it that a young man of your manner and speech is found in such a rough and disagreeable calling?"

In reply to this question, and the kindly look that accompanied it, I told her my history, which was scant enough. My name was Richard Proctor. I was the son of an old seafaring friend of Captain Mayhew's, was twenty-two years old, and had been afloat some three years. While I held the nominal berth of second mate of the *Ben Bolt*, I was for the most part studying seamanship and navigation with her captain, who was as good a sailor and navigator as ever trod a deck, and who, though known as a hard man, had never treated me with aught but kindness.

To this dull recital my passenger listened with seeming interest. "And have you no ambition beyond a sailor's life?" she asked.

"I esteem it a noble calling, Miss," I replied; and forthwith entered into a defense of Jack's trade that sprang more from a memory for sea tales than from experience; for, short as the latter had been, I had witnessed sights that I had no mind to recall. Miss Annerly listened with an encouraging smile.

"You are right," said she, nodding. "A gentleman is a gentleman before the mast or in my lady's drawing room. For this voyage, then, come what may, I shall feel that I have a protector."

These words, coming as an echo of my own thoughts, sent the blood tingling about my ears. I glanced quickly at the young lady's face, expecting to find her laughing at me. But no; there was a serious look in her eyes. It was the first time that I had looked straight into those eyes, and I thought afterwards that she must have read in mine the foolish thoughts that were running in my head.

"I would do anything to serve you," I said warmly, and was rather glad at that moment to find myself within the shadow of the *Ben Bolt*.

When I got back to the town I learned that the complaint against Captain Mayhew having been dismissed by the consul, the two seamen had taken to their heels, with the captain and a detachment of Russell police in hot pursuit. As I could think of nothing better to do while awaiting the skipper's return, I strolled into Flood's Hotel.

Besides the proprietor, the sole occupant of the drinking room was a gentleman that sat at a table near the door, with his chair tilted against the wall, his hands in his coat pockets, and an unlighted cigarette caught loosely between his lips. He was large and well built, flaxen haired and blue eyed, and would have been handsome but for a too prominent nose and a scar, that might have been caused by a saber slash, across his left cheek. There was something about the man that I did not fancy — possibly his provokingly cool appearance; the day was intensely hot, and I was much heated by my pull at the oars. I set him down, without

good reason, as a stranger to Russell, for there was nothing about that out-of-the-way place to attract a tourist, and there were no vessels except the *Ben Bolt* in port.

As I entered he nodded pleasantly, and without troubling to remove his cigarette inquired, in lazily deliberate tones: —

"From the whaler?"

I replied as briefly, but the catechism had only begun. In response to his carelessly put queries I stated that the *Ben Bolt* was a bark of six hundred tons' burden; that she carried twenty men, including boat-steerers, and three officers; that the crew was composed chiefly of Portuguese, with a sprinkling of Yankee boys that had cut from home for various reasons; that the cabin was entirely below the main deck; that there were three rooms in the cabin, and that the captain's room was on the starboard side; and a number of other details concerning the order of things aboard the bark that impressed me as being of no significance to a stranger, least of all to a man of the world, such as my questioner appeared to be. One inquiry, when the captain intended to sail, I could not answer.

"But," said I, as at that moment I caught sight of my commander rolling up the approach to the tavern, "here comes Captain Mayhew, and if there is anything about the *Ben Bolt* that you haven't discovered, perhaps he can enlighten you." The faintest sort of a smile flitted across the gentleman's face. He thanked me, lighted his cigarette, and picked up a newspaper at his elbow.

Captain Mayhew was breathing hard, partly from presumed exertions and partly from visible wrath. As he strode up to the bar and called for a glass of brandy, I went out on the veranda and paced up and down, awaiting possible orders. Five minutes went by, and glancing through the open window, I discovered the captain in close speech with the gentleman of the scar. A bottle was on the table between them, and I noted that the captain had regained his breath and a fair share of what passed with him for amiability. The table being near the window, I overheard, without design of playing the listener, a part of the conversation.

"What you tell me, Mr. Tutherly, may be all fair and above board," the captain was saying; "but when John Mayhew passes

his word, there is an end of the matter. That, sir, is the only vartue that I pretend to lay hold on."

"And the sentiment does you credit, Captain," came the reply, with the shadow of a sneer in it. "But it strikes me that in this case you might strain a point with a clear conscience and without prejudice to your honor. The peace and happiness of a family deserve consideration, sir."

"I reckon the family will have to manage their own affairs," said the captain. "Besides, sir, the young lady has spun me a vastly different yarn, and, begging your pardon, her word is as good as yours, as far as it goes."

There was a pause, and then Tutherly, as his name appeared to be, spoke again. "Captain Mayhew," said he, "for excellent reasons I can say no more upon the matter than I have told you. But I warn you, sir, that if you refuse to accept either of my propositions the consequences may be unpleasant to you."

"I wish you luck," returned the skipper, with something like a chuckle.

"I'll pledge you there with a will," retorted the other. I heard the clinking of glasses, and presently the captain came out of the tavern and signified his intention of going aboard the bark. I ventured to ask what success had attended upon his pursuit of the deserters, and he growled a reply to the effect that they were by that time half way to Whangarea, and be damned to them.

The captain had a final call at the consul's, and that over we went down to the pier. There we found Tutherly, pacing leisurely up and down, and seemingly unmindful of the broiling sun. Without remark he watched our preparations for departure, but as the boat shot away from the landing he called out: —

"*Bon voyage*, Captain Mayhew! I'll see you again."

"I'm damned if you will!" flung back the captain.

The other laughed, a merry, bantering laugh, and turning on his heel, walked slowly towards the town.

The tide had begun to ebb when we reached the bark, and the captain gave orders to weigh anchor. Half an hour later, with a fresh easterly breeze, the *Ben Bolt* stood out of the Bay of Islands and turned her prow to the northwest.

Miss Annerly had remained on deck, looking toward Russell, until we left the bay, when she vanished in the cabin, to reappear shortly afterwards, her white skirts exchanged for a becoming costume of blue serge. She gave me a nod and a smile, thanked me for a seat that I placed for her in the lee of the companion hatchway, and directed her attention to a book. But it seemed to me that her thoughts were far from her reading. She would sit motionless for ten minutes at a time, with the book in her lap and her hands clasped across it, and gaze absently at the misty coast line. I asked Mr. Frye, the mate, what port the bark was bound to, but found him as ignorant as myself. Opportunity for a good guess was not long delayed.

At sundown, when North Cape was about four miles distant, bearing south, Captain Mayhew came up from the cabin, glanced around, and called to the mate: —

"Mr. Frye, man the starboard fore and main braces. Put your helm up, Carter. Lay the yards square. How's her head now?"

"West, sir," replied the man at the wheel.

"Steady your helm. Let her go off another point. Steady — so. Keep her west by south, and steer straight." Saying which, the captain returned below.

The wind had hauled, since we left Russell, to about east-northeast, and the bark was running with the wind a point on the starboard quarter. The weather clew of the mainsail had been hauled up, the spanker and jib sheets eased off, and the studding sails set fore and aft. With a ten-knot breeze and all sail set, the *Ben Bolt* was bowling along towards the coast of New South Wales, a thousand miles away.

In the plain tale that I am setting down I shall make no further apology for my words and acts than that I was young, impulsive, and impressionable. While I am still far from old, the roving life that I have led has shattered many of my ideals and swept away most of my airy castles. But I shall never forget those few days aboard the *Ben Bolt*, when the heart was young and the blood ran swiftly, and life seemed as bright and as joyous as the tender skies that arched above the southern seas.

I was in love. I sang it to the stars, as I paced the deck in the lonely hours of the middle watch. I cried it to the fickle winds

that would not stay to listen, and to the constant waves that sought to follow the bark in her flight. I was in love; but in love, as I told myself, with a being so far above me, so removed from my sphere of life, that I never thought seriously of voicing my secret to other ears than those of Mother Nature.

Captain Mayhew exchanged but few words with his handsome passenger. While he was as polite as his iron nature allowed, he made no effort toward amiability. He spent on deck no more time than duty demanded, and as Miss Annerly avoided the cabin the larger part of the day, she and I were very much in each other's company. She expressed an interest in everything about the *Ben Bolt*, and would listen with sympathetic eyes and seemingly attentive ears while I explained the names of the masts, yards, and rigging, the uses of sheets, braces, halliards, and stays, and the thousand little things so bewildering to the landsman, yet so simple to the nautical mind.

But her interest centered in the mysteries of latitude and longitude. Each noon she would watch the operation of taking the sun, and later would sit by my side at the little table in the cabin, while I calculated the latitude and longitude, to compare with the figures made by the captain, and pricked off on the chart the position of the *Ben Bolt*. If the reckoning showed a good run for the bark her face would light up with pleasure; but if the contrary were shown, she would frown, and ask anxiously what were the chances for a better run on the morrow.

The *Ben Bolt* was a fast sailer, and during the first day out from Russell we covered 256 of the eleven hundred odd miles to Sydney, to which port Miss Annerly one morning informed me she was bound. But during the afternoon of Sunday, the second day, the wind fell flat, and the bark barely had headway on the long swells. During that day we added only a hundred miles. We did better the next day, rolling up 240; but on Tuesday and Wednesday variable winds and head seas prevailed, and we tallied only 276 miles for the two days.

On Thursday, at noon, the *Ben Bolt* was in latitude 34° S., longitude 158° E., with three hundred miles of open water between the tip of her flying jibboom and Sydney. We had made a run of 872 miles in five days, an average of nearly 175. I told

Miss Annerly that this was a remarkably good record for the *Ben Bolt*, or for any other sailing craft of her size, and she expressed herself as well satisfied with the performance; for the most she had desired was to reach Sydney within seven days, a desire that now bade fair to be gratified.

Friday morning I turned out at sunrise, and stood for a few moments on the topgallant forecastle, watching the effect of the sun's rays on the westerly waste of gray sea and sky into which the bark was sweeping. Suddenly there was borne to my ears, on the rush of the easterly wind, the tones of a sweet, clear, and unfamiliar voice, and fragments of a song about "the lark" and "heaven's gate" and "chaliced flowers." I whipped about in surprise, but the belly of the mainsail shut everything abaft the waist of the vessel from view.

"With everything that pretty is,
My lady sweet, arise!
Arise, arise!
My lady sweet, arise!"

I waited till the song was done, and then hurried aft, to receive a shock of surprise that literally took my breath away.

Leaning against the weather rail, with his face turned to the blazing east and his head bared to the fresh, sweet breeze, was the man that we had left on the pier at Russell almost a week before. I swept a quick glance around the sea. There was not a sail in sight.

At that moment Miss Annerly came up the companionway. I saw her look toward Tutherly, and then, as if faint, seize the manrope for support. Her face grew white even in the rosy light of the dawn, and an unmistakable expression of fear leaped into her eyes. All this in a twinkling, and while the gentleman was turning his gaze in her direction. The next instant she was advancing, with composed face and outstretched hand, and saying,—

"Good morning, Mr. Tutherly. This is another unexpected meeting."

"Just came aboard," said he, holding her hand a moment, and surveying her in frank admiration. "Beautiful morning, isn't it?"

"Charming," said she, shading her eyes and looking adown the crimson wake of the *Ben Bolt*. "I haven't missed a sunrise for six days."

At this point I walked away and plied the man at the wheel for an explanation of Tutherly's presence on the bark; but all the helmsman could say was that the stranger had come sauntering aft some few minutes before I had made my appearance. I went forward, but the lookout had not even seen Tutherly. Taken flat aback, I returned aft and went below. As I passed Miss Annerly and Tutherly the former excused herself on pretense of securing a wrap, and followed me into the cabin. With a glance at the door to the captain's room, and in a voice that trembled a bit with excitement, —

"Dick," said she, "how came that man aboard this vessel?"

"If you do not know, I am sure I cannot tell," said I, with a kind of foolish resentment. "You appeared to be well in his acquaintance, and accepted his presence on the bark as a matter of course. I never saw the man but once before, at Russell, on the day we left it."

And thereupon I told her of my encounter with Tutherly, of the questions he had put to me, and of the fragment of speech that I had overheard between him and the captain.

Miss Annerly listened without interruption, and when I had done she went into her stateroom, secured the wrap for which she had ostensibly come, and walked slowly out of the cabin.

All that day my head was in a whirl. Miss Annerly's fear of Tutherly was none the less plain to me despite the gayety with which she veiled her real feelings. And her words of our first meeting, "For this voyage, then, come what may, I shall feel that I have a protector," rang incessantly in my mind's ears.

Captain Mayhew's bearing towards Tutherly rather widened than narrowed my field of fancy. I was forward at the time of their second meeting, and lost the opportunity of enjoying the skipper's astonishment when he clapped eyes on the bark's new passenger; but shortly after the captain came up from the cabin I noted the two men under the lee of the tryworks, in earnest conversation. The captain appeared to be laying down the law, emphasizing his remarks with sundry thumps upon the rail;

while the other, his hands in his pockets and his chin in the air, listened with a provoking smile and an occasional interruption. What passed between them I could only surmise, but the upshot of the lengthy colloquy was that Tutherly took a seat at the breakfast table with us, and "ate a good deal for an astral body," as Miss Annerly declared laughingly; a remark that puzzled me not a little.

During the day the captain paid no further attention to Tutherly, except to sedulously shun him; nor did I pass more time aft than was necessary. I could not bear to see Evelyth smiling into Tutherly's face when I felt that distrust and dislike were in her heart; and I should have picked a quarrel with the fellow if I could have found a decent excuse.

At noon the log showed a run for the twenty-four hours of 220 miles, and I calculated that if the wind held we should be in Sydney harbor the next morning, several hours before sunrise. At nightfall the wind was in the same point, north by east, and rising fast.

After supper I sought my bunk in the steerage, to which I had removed my dunnage that Miss Annerly might have the third room in the cabin. As I lay sleepless for an hour or more, my mind busy with the day's doings, fancy wove the romance of a beautiful girl, and a lover waiting at Sydney; of an unconsenting family, and an emissary of parental opposition,— perhaps a rival suitor,— who had dropped, as from the clouds, upon the deck of a bark in mid-ocean; and of a foolish lad that loved the maid in secret, who gave his worship freely, and with no hope of reward.

I was awakened by a tremendous uproar above deck, the rush of many feet, and the shouts and curses of men in conflict. "Mutiny" said I as I tumbled into my clothes; then came the thought that Evelyth was in danger, and I sprang for the ladder.

When I reached the deck the din had subsided, except for a violent thumping in the direction of the forecastle. The bark was swinging off, and men were at the braces. Dark forms were skurrying hither and thither in the light of an uncertain moon, and a landsman's eye would have seen only a hopeless disorder. But there was method in the mischief that was plainly afoot.

I started aft, but had gone scarcely a dozen feet when a hand was laid upon my arm, and a sharp voice demanded, "Here, what are you skulking around for? Lay for'ard and man the"—

I knocked the fellow down with a swinging blow, and continued aft on the run, with his curses in my ears. As I approached the cabin another man sprang at me from beside the wheel; but I dove under his arm, and fairly leaped down the companionway.

When I flung into the cabin Captain Mayhew was struggling with Tutherly, who had the skipper's arms in a grip that must have been like steel. Miss Annerly stood by the table, watching the altercation with an expression that was half fear and half defiance. Her hands were clenched and her lips compressed, and her eyes flashed back the rays of the lamp that swung above her head. Before I could interfere Tutherly had forced the skipper into a chair.

"Sit there, Captain Mayhew," said he, "while I talk with you."

"You damned pirate!" roared the captain; "what in Sam Hill do you mean?"

"I mean," replied Tutherly, stepping to the cabin door and sliding it to with a crash, "that the *Ben Bolt* shall not reach Sydney to-morrow, the 30th of December!"

"Ah!"

The single syllable from Miss Annerly's lips broke a silence that had abruptly succeeded the uproar within and without the cabin. The only sounds now from above were the measured tread of the officer of the deck (whoever he might be), the rattling of the blocks and spars and the thundering of the sails.

The air of the cabin was heavy with cigarette smoke, and the table was littered with ashes and half-filled whiskey glasses. The captain had plainly been drinking deeply; and what with the spirits and his natural high temper, he now looked ugly enough to do murder, as he sat with set teeth and dilated nostrils, and his fingers gripped about the arms of his chair. Miss Annerly had thrown herself back in her chair, and with her hands clasped behind her head, was gazing steadily at Tutherly from behind half-dropped eyelids. And as I looked upon her face a great lump came into my throat, and a darkness before my eyes.

Tutherly stood in the middle of the cabin, in his favorite attitude, hands in coat pockets, his blue eyes snapping with an exultation not apparent in the quiet speech that he now addressed to the skipper.

"Captain Mayhew," said he, "at Russell I made you two propositions, which you declined to consider, on the ground that you had passed your word with Miss Annerly to place her in Sydney within seven days, if it lay in the *Ben Bolt* to turn the trick. I did not press you, because I doubted your ability to make your promise good. But the bark is fast, Captain Mayhew, — remarkably fast."

"Well, what's your game?" growled the skipper hoarsely.

"The honor of an English family!" was the ringing reply. "A pretty game, is it not, captain? And just at present I hold the winning cards. The *Ben Bolt* is in charge of my men, and with Sydney light astern, is speeding on the back track as fast as wind can send her."

"You infernal villain!" began the captain, starting from his chair as if it had been strewn with nettles. He swayed a moment unsteadily on his feet, glaring at Tutherly, who moved not a muscle, and then dropped back into his chair, with a growl that lost itself in his throat.

A grim smile settled about Tutherly's mouth. He lighted his eternal cigarette and threw himself into a seat by the table.

"An American, like yourself, Captain, I regret that circumstances left me no other course than I have taken," said he. "The game was in my hands when you and your bark blundered into Russell and upset my calculations. As it is, I have delayed action until the eleventh hour; and for the act of piracy, as it may seem in your eyes, I am ready to offer you any satisfaction that you may in reason demand."

"I don't want any of your damned sentiment," returned the captain. "All I want you to do is make good what I have probably lost by the failure of my contract with this lady, and get off my bark as soon as the Lord 'll let ye."

"The first I shall be happy to do immediately, and the second at sunrise," said Tutherly. He took a check book from his pocket, and picked up a pen with a laconic —

"How much?"

"Five hundred dollars," said the captain.

"Cheap enough," rejoined Tutherly, writing. "There you are, Captain," said he, tearing off the check. "If you go to Sydney you will receive a case of excellent brandy, which I wish you would accept with my compliments. Never mind the sentiment in the case, although it is as honest as the liquor. And now, Miss Annerly, as you choose to call yourself, suppose that you and I proceed to terms."

The young lady laughed — a low, unpleasant laugh, but there was not a ripple on the current of her speech. "It pleases you, sir," said she, "to talk as you act, in riddles."

Tutherly blew a cloud of smoke at the deadlight over his head. "Then," said he, "I'll be plain as daylight. As you cannot reach Sydney by the 30th of December, your opportunity for mischief is gone, and the value of the papers in your possession is necessarily much depreciated. There must not, however, be annoyance in the future, and to that end I am authorized to offer you, in exchange for the documents, a sum of money that I should advise you to accept." He paused, and again dipped his pen.

"May I inquire, Mr. Tutherly, as you choose to call yourself," said Miss Annerly pleasantly, "by what right you, an American, have thrust yourself into this affair?"

"The right of a friend of the family," replied Tutherly. "Frankly," he went on, writing in his check book, "were the case my own, I should not pay a penny. However" — He pushed the slip of paper across the table. "There," said he, "is a check on the Bank of Sydney for five thousand pounds."

Miss Annerly picked up the bit of paper, glanced carelessly at it, and curled it around one finger in a moment of meditation. Then she took from her bosom a packet of yellowing letters, and tossed it upon the table. And as Tutherly took the packet, and untied the ribbon that bound it, she leaned her elbows upon the table, with her chin in her hands, and watched him with a smile that hid I know not what storm of emotions in her breast.

At this point Captain Mayhew rose abruptly and stumbled to his room. I was restrained from following his example by a foolish desire to witness the complete demolition of the altar at which

I had worshiped, and so I sat looking dully on, while the ashes of my first romance settled about me.

The inspection of the letters appeared to be satisfactory, for Tutherly retied the packet, placed it in his breast pocket, and buttoned his coat across it.

"I presume, Mr. Tutherly," said Miss Annerly, drumming on the table, "that I am indebted to your fertility of invention for the series of accidents and other delays that have attended my journey from England, including my remarkable casting away at Russell?"

Tutherly's eyes twinkled, and the corners of his mouth twitched.

"Mr. Tutherly, you are a very clever man."

"Thank you," said he. "You are the cleverest woman I ever knew."

"Are you quite sure that you know me?" she asked, with the same inscrutable smile.

"I had a friend that did," he replied drily. "Perhaps you remember him — Ned Carrington?"

"Poor Ned!" murmured Miss Annerly dreamily. "But he was *such* a fool." She rose and crossed to her stateroom. "I trust, Mr. Tutherly," said she, looking back, "that I have seen the last of you?"

"'I do desire we may be better strangers,'" he retorted, and the door closed upon her.

"Gad, what a woman!" muttered Tutherly, tossing away his cigarette and pouring out a glass of liquor. "Mr. Proctor," — as if he had just noticed my presence in the cabin, — "will you join me?"

I declined shortly and went on deck. I needed a breath of fresh air, and there was a plenty of it abroad. The wind had risen to half a gale, and the bark, close hauled, was driving east by north, with her lee chains buried in the smother. Heavy banks of rack were sweeping across the high-riding moon, and astern on the horizon a single light gleamed as a planet. It was the great light at Sydney.

I made my way to my bunk, but sleep would not come to me. My mind ran on the exciting incidents of the night, and I wondered what tragic drama of human passions lay back of the little

comedy played in the cabin of the *Ben Bolt*. All that I had witnessed made but one scene in the play; and so far as I was concerned, the curtain had doubtless dropped forever.

In response to the call, "All hands on deck!" I turned out in the gray of the morning. The sea had gone down, and the wind had dwindled to a three-knot breeze. The crew were standing about in the waist, awaiting orders, and Tutherly and his men — a round dozen of them — were grouped at the wheel, which was in the hands of one of their number. As I went aft Tutherly was rolling up a flag with which he had been signaling astern, and was turning to the crew.

"Lay aft, some of you chaps," he called, "and haul the mainsail up. Man the weather main brace. Let go your lee brace. Put your wheel down, Roberts."

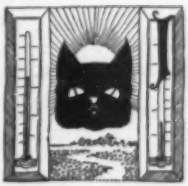
The *Ben Bolt* lay hove to, and then an explanation of Tutherly's signals presented itself. Approaching the bark I saw the strangest craft that I had ever clapped eyes upon. She was about seventy feet long, shaped like a fat cigar, and was running with her deck just awash; but no smoke came from the funnel that rose some two feet above the waves. As this huge steel fish drew near it rose gradually to the surface; a scuttle swung up, as it seemed, automatically, and a man's head and shoulders pushed into view. At a signal from Tutherly the stranger shot under our lee quarter, and was made fast by the man addressed as Roberts.

Captain Mayhew came up from the cabin in time to see Tutherly follow the last of his men over the side. One by one they dropped out of sight, and the scuttle descended slowly as the submarine craft drifted away from the bark.

A moment later, as if to give a theatric touch to the departure, she dove beneath the waves, and the huge fin at her stern flashed back the first rays of the rising sun.

Bigler's Barometer.

BY SAM DAVIS.



EXISTED contemporaneously with Bigler in Virginia City, and recall the circumstance with some little degree of pride.

We all had our vices in those days, and while not mentioning my own, I will take the liberty of stating that gambling was Bigler's.

His never-ceasing desire to make merchandise out of the bad judgment of other people was notorious, and I am frank to admit that on more occasions than I would care to enumerate I have fallen a victim to his extraordinary tendencies in that direction.

Yet I feel that a proper regard for his memory compels me to say that in his halcyon days he scorned the slightest approach to underhanded play on his own part, nor would he tolerate it for a single moment in others. I recall, as I write, how he once killed a man who had cheated him at cards at the Ozark saloon at Carson City, the place of my present abiding. He had lost a couple of thousand, for which he cared little, and was proceeding on the quiet tenor of his cocktail route, when he chanced to learn, by the merest accident — he was not the man to go prowling about searching for ill of his kind — that his antagonist had resorted to the desperate extremity of nailing a rabbit foot under the table where the game had been in progress, hoping thereby to reap unfair advantage for his own unworthy ends by hoodooing his opponent. It was this reliable revelation that caused Bigler, after several minutes of mature reflection, to return to the scene of his undoing, and shoot a hole into Miles Hickey, which, according to the report of the coroner's jury, resulted in the death of the latter gentleman. Next day when before the magistrate, he remarked that his case was of such a nature that he would need no attorney, and making a statement of the simple facts as near as he could recall them, was interrupted during the recital, by the information that he was

discharged, as the honorable court had no further business with the case except to read a sharp reproof to the officious district attorney for obtruding it upon the court, at a positive expense to overburdened taxpayers. Even the plea of the dead man's attorney, that the deceased had a large family to support, was swept aside by the court as having but scant relevancy to a matter which was pure and simple self-defense, and nothing else that the court knew of.

The killing of Hickey, however, did not seem to satisfy Bigler, as it did not bring back the money he had lost, and he seemed to think the State should reimburse him. As no move was made in that direction, he vowed that, as cheating was recognized in Nevada, he should in the future take care of himself, and other people could do the same.

He lost at cards and he lost at stocks, and finally had to hire himself out to Jack Bradley as a common hostler. They had known each other in the mines, and been chummy in the old days, but Bradley had become a millionaire now, and there was a gulf between them. The only common ground they met on was the inborn disposition each had to gamble on anything that possessed the slightest ingredient of chance. Bradley considered himself something of a weather sharp, and liked above anything to bet on the possibilities of a rainstorm. He used to bet Bigler a month's salary or any part of it on the weather, and Bigler, being dead game after the manner of his class, never failed to come to the center when bantered by his employer. He sometimes won, and sometimes lost, but in the long run found that he was working for Bradley for nothing. Noting the habits and peculiarities of Bradley, he made an important discovery. It was nothing less than the fact that a few days before the weather was bad Bradley became very logy in his walk, and that prior to clear weather he was light headed or "nutty," so to speak. Pondering on this circumstance, Bigler figured out the scientific reason of it. Bradley had worked in a Virginia City pan mill before he was wealthy, and had become salivated with quicksilver. In this way he had been transformed into a human barometer, a natural product, as one might say, and much more reliable and sensitive than the manufactured article.

The way in which the quicksilver mounted to his head or settled in his lower extremities was a most positive indication of weather events; the prognostication never went astray, and his spirits rose and fell with the mercury.

After Bigler had figured this down to an allspice, he came to the center in great shape when his employer wanted to gamble on the weather. But he went into the game intelligently and with proper forethought. He let Bradley win a few small bets while he was experimenting with his system, and then lay back for big money.

The system worked like a charm, and when he was losing his money, betting the wrong way on purpose, he felt happy, for he knew just what a fine financial future was ahead of him. He allowed himself to lose so many times that he finally got odds of ten to one, and then he made ready for his series of grand coups. When he saw Bradley getting gay and predicting that the Populist party would carry thirty-four States in the Union, he considered it about time to bet on fair weather, as Bradley's talk showed very plainly that the mercury was getting to his head, and fair weather was a dead certainty. So he went over to Dun's saloon and borrowed the money to put up the spot cash. He won a cool thousand, and this made old Bradley mad and reckless, and filled with a desire to get even. When a man gets in this condition he becomes an easy game, and a certain prey to designing enemies.

Bigler went at his man while the demon of a desire to get even had full possession of him, and in a short year had his money and his real estate safe in his pocket, so to speak.

Recalling the way Bradley had given him employment in his days of poverty, he generously reciprocated the favor, and put his old employer at work on the horses the latter had once owned. In this way he had a more favorable opportunity than ever to study the weather through Bradley, — he called him Jack now, — and soon acquired a local reputation for being the greatest weather prognosticator of the far West.

It was not long, however, before he began to weary of his limited orbit, and his friends encouraged him in the ambition to fill a wider sphere, secretly hoping, of course, that the sphere aforesaid

would prove too big for him to fill. They urged him to go in and make a national reputation, and cast all the other weather prophets in the shade.

Spurred on by such encouragements, he finally got the Nevada legislature to memorialize Congress to give Bigler a chance to forward a few sample prophecies to the weather bureau at Washington, just to show the department how the thing was done. The memorial also set forth the great advantages to agriculture of having a reliable weather man on deck in place of the old skates who were at that time drawing salaries to deceive the people.

In due course of time Bigler received notice that the department was ready to receive his weather prognostications. This concession had been brought about through the untiring exertions of Senator Jonas, who had left a senatorial poker game at Willard's in order to bring the matter before the attention of the government.

This honor somewhat excited Bigler, and he began to talk in his sleep. He always made Bradley sleep in the same apartment, — for old acquaintance's sake, he said, but really to have him where he could study his changes of mercurial altitude, — and he gave forth so much weather in his somnambulistic trances that Bradley began to listen.

When he heard him mutter night after night, "If Jack only knew what was in him; if he only knew the cinch I have," and talk of that kind, Bradley went on a mental prospecting tour over himself, and like a flash he hit on the fact that he was loaded up with quicksilver, and the miserable ingrate he had called his friend had been utilizing him as a human barometer. The whole solution of the mystery came to him as rapidly as the returns on election day, that are posted up in New York several hours before the polls have closed in California. He began to wonder if the Lord would ever allow him to be sufficiently satiated with the satisfaction that was undeniably his due.

At first he decided to squash off the earth, as he would a noxious insect, the man who had robbed him of his wealth and reduced him to the level of a stable chambermaid, but after reflection he concluded to resort to strategy, and first break him of his reputation and humble him in the eyes of all the world while in the zenith of his fame.

It was easy enough. All he had to do was to pretend the quicksilver was in his head when it was in his feet, and *vice versa*. He began practising how to be hilarious when actually depressed, and how to be melancholy when, in reality, he was brimming with levity. The last was a simple matter, for he was naturally of a morbicund disposition; but to appear hilarious when actually depressed required greater histrionic effort. Finally, however, by practise, and the assiduous study of the humorous columns of the local press, and Joe Miller's jest book, he became a master of dissimulation.

The time arrived for Bigler to send on his first national prophecy — he was prognosticating for a continent now, and feeling nervous.

He watched Bradley like a cat. Bradley was also a good deal excited, for he realized it was the final struggle of their wits.

Although his spirits were at the top notch, he began at breakfast to complain of cold feet, and all day he grew more pensive and melancholy.

That night he asked Bigler to untie his shoe, advancing as a reason that he was unable to lift his foot up and lay his ankle over the other knee. When he crawled into bed he hinted at a desire to commit suicide.

This last remark was enough, and Bigler, rushing to the telegraph office, wired his first prophecy — a list of predictions of cloudbursts and cyclones, tempered with hail and lightning, that would have raised the hair of the American people in every town and hamlet and sent half the population to their cyclone cellars and storm caves if the papers had ever gotten hold of it. The fact that the weather department keeps its forecasts out of the press until they are over-ripe, so to speak, was all that saved it. Immediately there began such a spell of heavenly weather that Jack Bradley had to buy lead insoles for his shoes to keep himself from jumping up and down. Then came the change. He suddenly felt the subtle fluid surging into his feet, and it dropped with such a thud that only by a superhuman effort could he act chipper and happy, and reel off the jokes he had mastered. However, his desire for revenge, aided by his artistic temperament, brought him through. After three or four anxious hours, during which Bradley

saw with horror his meteorological instrument getting gayer every moment, this false prophet, now reduced to the pitiful necessity of hedging, rushed away again and sent off a second message. He said that the cyclone he had expected had met with a counter current and caromed off to the North Pacific Ocean, where it was churning a hole in the water and destroying the ships that were *en route* for the Arctic regions. The country could now look for a long spell of serene, delightful weather such as it had not experienced for years.

Scarcely had the bulletin been issued when the storm of the century burst upon the country and destroyed thousands of lives and millions of dollars' worth of property.

This disaster proved fatal to Bigler. Being a proud man, and unwilling to give up without a struggle, he decided to cut loose from Bradley, strike out independently, and go into training as a barometer himself. But as his age and dignity made the long preparatory course at the pan mill out of the question, he tried to hasten nature by adding a capsule of the desired element to his daily bill of fare; and died within a year, a victim to overweening scientific ambition.

Meantime, Bradley, awakened at last to the mine of wealth within him, decided to work it on his own account, and, fearing a repetition of the Bigler episode if he remained on his native heath, smuggled himself through the French Custom House, and is now at large somewhere in Europe. For that reason, if any one should, in the course of foreign travels, run up against a middle-aged, nervous, stoop-shouldered man, of markedly mercurial spirits, who wishes to bet on the weather, he'll do well to save his money. The man is no other than Bradley, the original and only Human Barometer; — and he's betting on a sure thing.

The Skyland Treasure.

BY FRANK BAILEY MILLARD.

MY burro had begun to drag his left fore-foot, an old trick of his when he had satisfactorily settled in his own brute mind that he had done a full day's work. But I had a wholesome dread of camping among the dark tamaracks, where we walked, and so I struck the little fellow smartly upon the flank, and we made off briskly along the trail toward a spring I knew, in a more open country down the slope, where I could now fancy a bit of a pine fire blazing cheerily, and my tiny tin teakettle bubbling above it. Not that I blamed the burro for lagging. We had made a large day of it. I had tried to turn the jaunt from the Hetch-Hetchy to Merced into a very idler's progress, but the heady air of the Sierra had got into me, and there is a propelling force in it and its piney smells that is not easily resisted when you are twenty-four and foot free.

We had lost the sun in the tamaracks, but when we made a rocky turn into the open he blazed redly out of the dun smoke-drift that blurred into secrecy the folds of the great saw teeth, and there lay the gray mound of granite which was the spring sign and the evening goal.

"Preempted!" was surprised from me as I saw a man and a woman sitting by the spring, while a little farther along a strange ark of a wagon loomed queerly. Two gray horses stared at the burro, and then tried to break tether. I had forgotten that the spring was so near the road, which I was sorry to reach, for it led back to civilization.

There were "good evenings," and some free mountain talk, an invitation to make one camp-fire of it, and a three-cornered supper. This did not enchant me, for I was up there to lose myself, and could have wished them and their ark well away from my

spring. Still, as they were setting out to be agreeable, I could do no less, and the supper, in which I tasted anew the finger of woman, swelled the remnant of my gregariousness.

After the tea the blue tobacco smoke passed like dreams amid the branches, and Madame, her soft, round cheek showing white against the dark firs, picked away at a little mandolin.

Henry Nivaltone and his wife were really an interesting pair. They were well matched, as it seemed. I could see that he was to her a great man, and, as it came off the reel of talk, a great artist. They had traveled far in their land ark, which, as they talked, became the subject of a ravening curiosity on my part.

"Altogether we have lived in it about two years," Nivaltone said. "It is really a studio on wheels, and the only one I have ever seen. Come over and have a look at it. We are used to playing exhibitors, eh, Metta?"

She laughed, lark-like, and said: "And we don't mind it except when things are torn up."

It was something more than a mere wheeled box, this house-wagon. It was only a dove-cote of a home for two young people, but it was amazingly resourceful. There were all manner of hinged contrivances that you let down or pulled up, and of which you made seats, or a table, or a bed, or a pantry, or an easel; and the lifting of a little tin sheet in a corner disclosed a nutshell of a stove. So that the house was an atelier, a bedchamber, a kitchen, or anything you pleased, at very short notice.

"We cook our meals outside, except in bad weather," said the artist. "You see how practical it all is."

"For an artist," put in the Madame. A tone of pride went with this bit of professionalism.

Then I asked to see the sketches. There were not so very many of them, and not so ambitious a set of subjects. There were bosky bits in the Coast Range, pretty plays of chiaroscuro in the redwood deeps, and a striking El Capitan — over-toned, I thought, but yet faithful in drawing. Ah, here were figures — portraits in quiet color, a fleshly nude, with good skin tints.

"And this?"— I started. It was a creation. A most malign Mexican face, that of an ugly, sinister man, with eyes that were points of crude fire, peering out of a deep shadow and looking

with the intensity of a ferocious spirit upon another man, just starting out of sleep. The Mexican held aloft a long, glittering knife. It was a wood scene and a dark one, but from a camp-fire there came a glow upon the faces of the two that made murder and fear of murder stare forth as they stare in the life. It was a scene to go with you and to dart up in your dreams.

It was now near to night. We went back to the fire, which we made to blaze high, and the pipes were lit again. The artist told a tale or two of their voyagings in the land-ark, she putting in the right touch on occasion.

"And the story that goes with that picture of the Mexican and the sleeper, Mr. Nivaltone — let me hear that," I said.

The man and the wife looked at each other.

"Oh, yes," said she. "Why not?"

"Mind," I puffed out with the smoke, "I don't insist."

A night-hawk gave his coarse call, the burro he-hawed, a horse snorted, and a green pine bough crackled in the fire.

"It was over in Skyland, away back of Sonora, up where the red snow-plant grows," said the artist,—and I was glad he was an artist, for there was a chance for some color in the tale. "The roads were bad in Skyland, and they said we would never get to Eagle's Nest Camp; but our horses were stout, and the grades were not so very heavy. I was anxious to paint the Skyland country. There's a beautiful lake up there — a dark gem of cobalt blue, in a clean hard light, broken by snowy peaks, with the blackest of shadows — something nobody could possibly paint, you know; but then I would be daubing away at anything in those days. We left the wagon for days at a time and went afoot, for we were good at that sort of thing, and Metta could stand it as well as I. She is the best mountain climber I ever saw for a woman, and as for sleeping out, she doesn't mind it a bit.

"When we got through sketching and came down to the western part of the Skyland country, by the stage road, we were prepared for a good rest. For a time we found no proper place for a long encampment, and kept following the stage road down a slope that seemed interminable. Just toward dusk one evening, while searching for a camping place, we saw ahead a canvas-covered wagon drawn by two horses. The wagon was moving

slowly down the grade, and it was not more than one hundred yards ahead when we first caught sight of it. As we drew near it began to go a whit faster and there was a deal of whip-cracking and calling to the horses, so that soon it gathered so much speed and bounded over the chuck-holes so wildly that it seemed rushing to perdition.

"Now what the rush was for I could not, for the life of me, make out. It made us both very curious, and we kept on after the runaways. Sometimes we heard the scream of their brake and fancied they were slackening, but they maintained their pace. Once I saw a dark head, in a white sombrero, around the right side of the front flap, and then another dark head, in a similar hat, darted from the left side. These glimpses of the men in the wagon did not please my fancy. They bobbed around a turn, and I heard them rattle down a steep little incline. It was some minutes before we reached the turn, and there before us lay a mile-long grade, cut sharp into the side of the mountain; but though we could see ahead for the whole of that mile, no white canvas was in sight. I hauled up short, and we stared into the deepening murk, but the whole turnout was gone! Metta shivered.

"'It is a Flying Dutchman of a wagon — that's all,' said she. 'I sha'n't sleep well to-night!'

"I labored with her and with my own obtrusive sense of the superstitious, yet I was not comfortable. I had known strange things to happen in the mountains, but I had never before known a covered wagon, with two men and two horses, to melt into nothingness between breaths.

"It was impossible that they should have gone over the bank, for we would have heard the crash. It was nerve-raveling, this sort of thing, and it was quite a while before we thought of supper. At the foot of the little incline down which the strange wagon had passed there was a dry creek bed, with a bottom of ground granite, into which our wheels crunched lightly. Up this we drove a little way and found a good spring. Here the dry bed widened, with a fringe of young pines about it and a giant sequoia to awe us. One of the enormous black roots of the big tree curled above the spring, making a rude arch over it.

"Metta got some scraps together for a meal, and we ate in a

nibbling, nervous way. Our talk ran low, until I saw it was necessary to be gay and reassuring."

"Which was very much overdone," threw in the wife, tossing a pine cone into the fire and watching its splendid sputter.

"It came on inky dark in the hollow. I saw Metta safely asleep — "

"Or thought you did," she interrupted again, her hand fondling the mandolin in its bag.

"And then I took the lantern and walked down the road. I was looking for tracks, but the road was hard and there had been no rain for a month, so that what tracks I saw there below the dry wash might have been made by the stage or by any other wagon. So then I came along back up the road, and thinking possibly that the strangers might have turned down the creek bed to camp, I let the lantern light fall along the shining granite dust down that way. But not the slightest mark of wheel or hoof did I see.

"With all manner of absurd conjectures glimmering out from my cerebral background, I trod lightly back to my couch in the coarse sand. Being more than merely weary, I slept hard for awhile. Then a terrific roaring awoke me and I sneezed violently, for my nostrils were full of dust. I knew instantly what the roaring meant, for this was not my first Sierra wind storm, though it was certainly the heaviest, howlingest blast I have ever known. All the powers of the air were abroad and seemed bent on wildest doings. A crash and a great thump sent me bounding to Metta's side, and she woke with a scream. A limb from the big tree had fallen to the ground near us, and one of its sprays, waving in the great draught up the creek, was whipping my face. If ever fate was good to us, it was then, for we had been, at the farthest, only a matter of three feet from instant death.

"I heard the horses snort wildly and plunge about on the bed of the wash, and having seen Metta down to the road, I went over to the poor beasts and struggled with them through the wind till we were all out in an open place.

"We lay low and fancied the storm was quieting, but, of a sudden, there was a great throe of tempest, and we heard a tearing up and heaving, and then the earth quivered under us, while a sonorous boom broke through the scurrying air.

"'The big tree's gone!' I shouted, with my mouth close to Metta's ear.

"'And the wagon, too!' she said.

"I hurried up the wash, and came stumbling back, almost on all fours. 'No, it's safe!' I yelled. 'The sequoia went down the other way.'

"We kept shouting at each other, like lunatics, although we sat close together, and I am sure had we not clutched roots or brush we would have gone flying over the mountains. But soon there was a lull, and after an hour the wind was well down. With dawn came a perfect day, with soft sunshine and not a fern-spray moving. We had lost some light camp things, which had gone skyward, but we were full of the day and its goodness, and were for dancing in the creek bed and making a time of it.

"I should have been saddened by the prostration of the giant, whose fall marked the end of a life begun, perhaps, before Christ walked the earth or Homer sang of Helen. But somehow I could feel no great grief at that, for here in this fallen sequoia, with its mighty roots thrust high, and the sprawl of the black earth, was a great picture. I began to sketch without hurry, using care with my colors. While I painted, Metta botanized or hung about, watching me lay in the scene.

"'It's too bad about the spring,' she remarked, as I threw in a little blur of steel gray, to stand for the bubbling water. 'It's sinking into the big hollow where the tree stood.'

"The trickling outlet from the spring had turned from its tiny track at the side of the wash and was dripping into the black earth along the great roots. It formed quite a pool at the edge of the hollow, but soon the tiny dam that held it broke, and the water made its angry little rush into the black hole. When the muddy pool was gone it left me staring very hard, for there lay revealed a scrap of the surface of a board, with rusty nailheads near its edges.

"I went over to the hollow and scraped off the loose, wet mold from the board with my mahl-stick. All its edges defined, it seemed about two feet wide and three feet long. In one corner were roughly cut the words 'San Jose,' and below these were a ring and cross. Thrusting my stick into the earth alongside the board, I quickly made out that it was the lid of a box.

"'Of course it's empty,' said Metta, whose eyes looked unusually big; 'but there *might* be something in it.'

"'The axe will settle that without much delay,' said I, and I stepped to the wagon.

"'Quick!' called Metta from the edge of the hole. 'It's sinking!'

"I ran to her, axe in hand, but before I could get any sort of hold upon the box it slid rapidly down into the hollow, bumping a root as it went, and turning partly over with a clinking sound that fairly froze my imagination.

"'It *can't* be anything — it *can't* be!' insisted Metta.

"'Of course not,' spoke the pessimist in me; 'poor artists never have any such luck as that.'

"But I sprang into that hollow, pounced upon the box and swung the axe like a thing possessed. The thick lid of soggy red wood was splintered with a few hacks, and I pulled it off.

"'Leather on top!' cried Metta, jumping into the hole after me, regardless of mud or anything. 'That's a good sign.'

"'Pooh!' said I.

"But I dug at the leather with my fingers, and hauled away like a very fiend. It seemed to be a sort of bag — this leather — and it was tightly seamed. It had turned a rich brown from lying long in the ground, and it was moist and musty, and, truth to tell, it stank.

"'Can't you pull it out of the box?' asked Metta.

"'No,' said I; 'whatever of old iron or what not there is in it is too heavy.'

"'Why don't you cut it, then?'

"I fumbled for my knife, but I had left it at my easel. Metta ran to fetch it, while I, impatient, strained to lift the bag. I got hold of the tightly thonged mouth of it, where there was a bit of slack to be grasped, and managed to pull that above the box edge a little, but that was all I could do by way of lifting.

"Metta had the first slash at the bag.

"'It's tough,' she said, and she plunged the blade in again, slitting the leather in the slack place at the mouth.

"'Hallelujah!' cried I, in a rhapsody. Then I grasped her about the waist, and we danced a breakdown right there in all that mud and mire.

"For the knife blade had flipped out a couple of big red coins — stained and streaked with rust, it was true, but as truly gold as any gold of Ophir!

"The coins fell in the mud, and when I picked them up I saw that they were double eagles. I plunged my hand into the slit and brought forth a dozen more coins, each one like the first. Then my fingers scooped out a heavy mass of minutely grained metal, which I knew at a glance for gold dust, as I had seen plenty of it in the placer mines. The bag was full of it. Here was a fortune!

"The dates of the coins were varied, but none were within twenty years of the time of our discovery. From this it seemed fair to argue that the box had been buried at the foot of the tree for a long time. Redwood has been known to lie in the ground for thirty years without rotting, so that the condition of the box meant nothing in the consideration of the matter of time. One thing was plain — so far as immediate possession went: this gold, whatever its value, was ours. We who an hour before had nothing but a wagon, two horses, a few dollars, and some dabs of paint, were now persons of wealth. The flood-gate of fortune had opened and poured in upon us. I had hated the men who moiled in the money mill, I had despised their wealth, and here was I, as sordidly happy as the vilest money grubber who ever banked his stack of stealings.

"The question of getting the gold away was not a hard one. There were our horses and wagon, and the deep locker under the floor of the vehicle would hold the gold dust easily enough. As for the coins, I had already pocketed them.

"'Now for Europe, Egypt, India, everywhere!' cried Metta, with a febrile look in her face. 'But your art — you must not give that up. And to prove superior to your situation, you must stay right here until you have finished this last study.'

"'Yes,' said I absently, 'but we must weigh out this gold dust in some way. I can rig up some scales, using the coins as a basis for weights. I think I can hit off its value after a fashion.'

"'No — no weighing, no counting. You are not a mint laborer. You are an artist.'

"Somehow the word 'artist' sounded smaller than it had ever

sounded before. I was bent upon the weighing, and spent the better part of the day at it, in spite of my wife's protests. Toward evening, when I had roughly figured out that we had nearly ninety thousand dollars' worth of gold on our hands, and it had been safely stowed away in the wagon locker, I felt much wrought upon by the day's excitement; and as for Metta, she was in a highly nervous and almost hysterical state. And there we sat in that wagon, hugging ourselves and each other like two precious idiots.

"Then I heard a crunching in the gravel, and Jack, one of our horses, came dashing past, dragging a broken rope. I sprang out to secure him, but he ran break-neckedly along the creek bed, and crossing the road, kept on down the wash. We made turn after turn, and I must have chased a good quarter mile, when of a sudden Jack stopped short, as if frightened, and came back at a hard gallop. I was about to turn after him when I saw twisting through the underbrush a thin banner of blue smoke. Was it a camp-fire? I made another turn in the wash, and fairly fell back in dismay.

"There stood the Flying Dutchman, with its canvas sides flapping in the breeze, and two men sitting near it eating supper.

"They were the dark men who had driven in such a devil-may-care way down the grade. I thought it strange they had not started up when Jack came hoofing it so hard along the wash, but they had evidently not seen him and the light, shaley gravel had probably softened his sounds.

"I crept a little nearer, and saw that the men were 'Greasers' of a very low type. One of them had a dirty gray scar across his upper cheek, running nearly into his eye, and as his head turned and was caught by a pencil of light from the sinking sun, the scar took on a livid tint. The eyes were ferocious and were heavily bushed by the blackest of low brows. The nose was flat and the lips were protuberant. Altogether this was the most repulsive face I had ever looked upon. Evidently the man alongside was a lob of a fellow, but his head was in the shade of a tree trunk, so I did not make out much of it. The scar-faced man had an ugly knife in his belt, and there were rifles lying against a log.

"I went back a little way and sat down and thought very hard.

Why had these men flown before us on the grade, and how had they driven down the creek bed without leaving tracks? Then I thought of the storm and how it had flung the granite dust. It might have swept up their wheel marks and hoof prints. But the lantern search before the storm had revealed nothing of them. How was that?

"I walked back very slowly and with searching eyes. Soon I saw a stone in the creek bed, with a blue-gray mark upon it — just such a mark as a wagon wheel would leave; and nearer the road I found another similar mark upon another stone. Of a certainty they had driven down the dry bed after all. Near the road I searched the sides of the wash carefully, and I found foot-prints well up on the bank, where the ground was damp and heavy; and, looking still more carefully, I found two long green fir boughs cut from a near-by tree and slightly withered. As soon as I saw the boughs it came upon me how the tracks near the road might have been obliterated before the storm and before my search with the lantern. Walking along the bank, a man on each side of the creek could have swept out the tracks in a matter of five minutes as far down as the first turn in the wash, a few rods below; then by throwing in a few bits of dead brush, some stones and old moss, the swept surface could have been made to seem undisturbed.

"These surmises were satisfying to my sense of perception, but they were by no means reassuring. There was gold to guard, and here were sneaking campers who looked fit for any sort of villany. Did they know of the treasure? 'San Jose' and the cross! They were Spanish signs, safely enough. And these were men of Spanish tongue!

"I went back to camp, and without making much ado about it, got my rifle in trim, and put fresh cartridges in my six-shooter.

"'Ah, we're going to guard our treasure,' said Metta, laughing.

"'Yes,' said I, 'and I don't think we'll stop here much longer. Did Jack come back?'

"'I haven't seen him. Oh, he won't stray far from Jim. He'll be along pretty soon.'

"Daylight was nearly gone, and as I could not hunt horses in the dark, and had no wish to leave that wagon, I lay down and waited for the straying animal to return. I lay close beside the

wagon, and made Metta sleep inside. My rifle was beside me, and my revolver was in my hand. As I had no intention of sleeping, I had built a good fire near by. I had bunched up a lot of clothing, so that I could see well about and avoid surprise. But even a man of new wealth and heavy cares and forebodings may sometimes sleep, and I dozed off, recreantly, in those hours between midnight and three o'clock when it always seems hardest for me to keep awake.

"Into what peculiar state of subjective consciousness I now found myself it is not easy to describe. I was not really asleep in the ordinary sense, nor was I dreaming. Though my eyes must have been closed, I could see the wagon, and the fire, and the trees. Externals were everything to me, and my own entity was lost in them, also my sense of perspective. Like a kind of camera obscura, my mental vision played for some distance all about the camp, and the features of the landscape were sketched vividly upon my brain. The darkness did not seem to mar my sight in the least, and my range of vision was slowly extending. I saw Jack come back and take his place beside his mate. The circle widened, like a patch of sunlight falling from among dark clouds, and at last it took in the camp of the Mexicans. Both men were sitting by their wagon, each with rifle in hand. The scar-faced man was arguing with the other. I could see their lips move, and at times they made expressive gestures, truly Latin in their sweep and impatience. With rising heat, they glared at each other and made threatening movements. I saw the scar-faced man advance toward his companion. Then a great shadow blurred the whole scene, and I saw no more for a time, though I peered and peered through the darkness.

"At last my mental search-light glowed again, and I saw the scar-faced man walking up the creek bed. As he neared our camp he came more slowly and carefully. Reaching the road, he paused for a moment and then half walked and half crept toward us. Soon he was near the wagon, and coming up to it, on the side farthest from me, he leaned his rifle against it. He was trembling, and I saw him wipe the sweat from his brow with the back of his hand. Then he pulled from his belt his long knife, and crept with infinite caution toward me.

"I now felt a returning sense of my own ego, and with it came a prickly, cold, palpitating fear, such as I had never known before. And yet I could not stir an eyelid. The man was now right over me. He lifted his knife. His eyes were full of murder. He seemed to be seeking out my heart, and I felt as though I were helping him in the search. In his way he seemed as much wrought up as I was, and the moisture was again gathering on his brow. He knelt closer, and raised his knife a little higher for that awful thrust. Just then a drop of sweat trickled down his forehead and fell upon my right hand — the hand that held the pistol. Starting violently, I awoke, and turned quickly in a spasm of fright. The knife descended, but it only pierced my sleeve, and before he could recover himself my pistol had flashed out and he fell headlong into the ashes by the camp-fire.

"I saw that he was badly wounded. I turned about in vague fear of his fellow of the camp, who, I thought, might be near at hand, but I neither saw nor heard him. I went down the wash to the road, bidding Metta remain inside the wagon; but there was no sign of any further attack, so I returned to camp.

"'*Dios!*' I heard my man groan. I fetched him some water.

"He lived through the night, but not until he saw death well upon him did he tell his story of the gold.

"The tale began in the early sixties, when the Skyland country rang with the miner's pick, and the placers were washing down into the streams. A band of sluice robbers had purloined gold dust from near and far, generally in small quantities that had come from this or that claim. A vigilance committee had been formed, and the work of exterminating the band had been so nearly successful that only one man, old Francisco Calderez, had remained alive. He had hidden the robber's treasure in one place and another until it rested at the foot of the sequoia. Calderez fell ill and died before he could get the gold away. His two stepsons were his only relations of any sort. In ransacking his papers after his death they found a memorandum regarding the treasure, but though they had searched far for the gold, they had not found it until a week before our coming. They had immediately hired a team and wagon, and would have taken the treasure away but that we had chanced along and marred their plans.

"'But San Jose and the cross — whose marks were those?' I asked.

"'Old Francisco — he cutta them,' said the Mexican. 'San Jose his patron san. He cutta them for the luck.'

"The man died, cursing and praying by turns.

"Just as the sun rose through the pines next morning I stole cautiously down the dry wash towards the Mexicans' camp. There beside a log lay the scar-faced man's companion in the calm rigor of death, his hands sprawled out and his knife lying under one of them. That was how the quarrel had ended.

"I went back to camp and harnessed up. By evening we were at Sonora, and the gold was safe in bank, where, being weighed, it was found to be worth a trifle over eighty thousand dollars. After inquiry, I saw there was not the smallest likelihood of my finding the miners to whom the gold had belonged. There were many of them, they had nearly all left the country, and were scattered far.

"I sent the gold to San Francisco by express. In a month we were in France. Since then we have traveled the world well over. But somehow, in all the years we have spent abroad, and after all we have enjoyed among the art treasures of Paris, of Venice, and of Rome, we never have been quite so happy as when tooling about in the mountains in our old studio wagon, building our own camp-fires, cooking our own dinners, and breathing the air that makes men free and keeps their souls alive."

"And painting," said the wife, her hand stealing into his under cover of the mandolin bag. "His great landscape will hang in the Salon next year." And the tone that went with the words was such that I would the Rejection Committee had heard its melting optimism. "The scene is in the upper Skyland — those peaks and the blue lake which he told you were unpaintable. But *he* can paint them."

In the Mohawk Club.

BY THEODORE ROBERTS.

HE Mohawk Club house stands on the bank of a famous river, and at the edge of a famous though sleepy old town. The town is known in other lands as a place of culture and literary prestige, but The Onlooker, that mortal who seems to do nothing but brood over the world with smiling mouth and dreamy eyes, says that for its own part it appreciates the maker of a horseshoe more than the maker of a ballad. Why this is he doesn't attempt to say. But to return to the club house.

Most of the interior is taken up by one large room with a good floor, a fireplace, and a billiard table. There are many easy-chairs, also, and card tables in convenient places.

When the winds churn the river into white caps and rain pelts the roof, The Onlooker finds a strange fascination in sitting by the fire and studying the men around him. But he does it with a careless air, as if sitting out in the rain would amuse him fully as much, and the men, who are all his friends, sometimes forget that he is there.

A month ago The Onlooker's attention was drawn from the general crowd who played cribbage, clicked the ivory balls, and told stories, to the most active members of the club, Bertram Smith and Dick Nevers. At first, like a philosopher, he accounted for the slight change in their manners by the choice of Nevers as Master of Ceremonies for Ladies' Night, but the rumor that both were in love with the same girl caused him to think it over. He watched them closely when they met, making a note of the faint flush on Nevers's cheek, and the sullen light in Smith's black eye. Sometimes their greeting was too warm for his taste — at other times they failed to see each other.

"I wish they would fight it out like men," he said to the and-

irons; but he took that back, for Nevers was big enough to eat his rival without inconvenience.

Smith, who was the son of a wealthy merchant, was in a fair way of running a large medical practise before many years. Dick Nevers, the cadet of a broken family once renowned for its horses and style in entertaining, was a writer of poems and stories, sometimes even descending to newspaper work, at three cents a line. The Onlooker thought from the first that Nevers had the Fates against him.

As they all revolved in the same social circle, The Onlooker made it his duty to follow their little romance beyond the fireside of the Mohawk Club. So, after a week's consideration as to whether or no it were worth while, he obtained an introduction to the lady of their hearts' desire. We will call her Miss Marjorie, which may or may not be her name. From the corner to which he had fled after the introduction he looked at her carefully, as she was the chief character in the little story he was following. Her eyes were the first things he noticed; then her mouth, which was large, but fatally attractive; then her hair. He did not altogether blame his friends, but it puzzled him to think that Nevers, wrapped up in his books and dreams, should allow a pair of eyes and a moderately charming smile to spoil his peace.

The Onlooker flatters himself with the belief that he has a keen insight into character and human nature, and on the strength of this he was not long in deciding that Miss Marjorie was a flirt. He enjoyed flirts to a certain extent (no one would think so), therefore this discovery did not lower her far in his philosophical eyes. He farther noticed that when her eyes were gray, Smith was in favor, but when they softened to a wonderful blue, Dick Nevers, with his maiden rhymes, had the inside track. They both came in for rebuffs and hours of indifference at the lady's hands. Nevers swallowed these repulses and tried to look delighted, while Smith scowled.

For awhile The Onlooker seemed to find developments slow, for he kept away from his usual seat by the fire, and people wondered what he was doing. If it had been Nevers who lay low they would have said, "He is writing poetry."

About this time Smith and Nevers began to criticize one an-

other's breeding and attire, and Smith developed a perpetual sneer.

One morning The Onlooker entered the club with his old-time stride and found six fellows standing around the billiard table. The rivals were having a game. Smith was playing spot ball. Nevers chalked his cue hurriedly, and glanced at the balls. His was close against the cushion and called for a strong draw. His face was flushed when he shot, and his eyes expressed more joy than one would have thought the occasion demanded when he scored. His next three were easy ones, then his cue scratched and twisted and the ball rolled harmlessly a few inches.

He marked up his four and then watched with a wan smile while Smith made a run of ten.

The Onlooker asked if they had anything up on the game. Nevers nodded. The other fellows exchanged glances. Smith swore easily to himself as Dick made a run of difficult shots. The Onlooker, feigning a great indifference, stood back, while the others closed in around the table. It was close now, with three on one string and five on the other. But The Onlooker sat in his chair and picked up a paper.

Presently Dick put his cue in the rack and went out, keeping his back to the crowd.

Smith smiled softly when the door closed, then, producing his cigar-case, he passed it around. With a condescending smile he went over to The Onlooker; but that harmless individual was thoughtfully pulling at his pipe, and would not take a cigar.

Early next morning Dick Nevers, accompanied by an Indian guide, started for the woods after big game.

When The Onlooker heard of it he swore, and Smith, who was near by, cringed. He did not like the way The Onlooker's eye blazed wide and scrutinized him.

Once young Peeble entered the club room noiselessly and, going over to the fire, glanced over The Onlooker's shoulder. The other had a little pile of proof sheets on his knee and was marking them with a blue pencil.

"Are you doing some work for Nevers?" asked Peeble.

The Onlooker thrust the papers into his pocket and turned slowly from the fire.

"Perhaps I am doing it for Nevers, and perhaps for some other man," he said; and that is all Peeble could discover.

Miss Marjorie played poor Smith so fast and loose that he almost wished Nevers had not gone away, for it had always been a comfort to him to see a companion in woe.

On the evening of the first dance of the season The Onlooker, with a new fire in his eyes, sat with Miss Marjorie in a quiet corner. He was telling her of the billiard game, and she was giving listless ear.

"What stakes were they playing for?" she asked, pretending not to see Smith, who glared from the other side of the room.

"The right of the field," he answered — "the practical man against the visionary! Are you sorry that the man of rhymes was three points short?"

The Onlooker asked this with a boldness formerly unknown to him.

She looked at him merrily. Her eyes were neither blue nor gray, but of a shade he had never seen before.

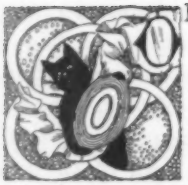
"I am quite indifferent as to who got the game," she answered, "but my preference is for poets rather than other men."

The Onlooker cast a quizzical glance, but her face was averted. And of a sudden, he remembered that he too was a maker of ballads.

Then this harmless, dreaming Mohawk watched the red tinge the clear cheek of La Belle Dame Sans Merci. A great glow pervaded his heart and soul. Poor Nevers — poor Smith!

Reincarnation.

BY STANLEY EDWARDS JOHNSON.



ONE would never have suspected Jerry Carleton of being a philosopher, if one had chanced to meet him at work on his stony farm among the New Hampshire hills. His wide-brimmed straw hat hid his domelike head from view, and, to a casual observer, his working clothes and unkempt beard would have bespoken the yeoman of the glebe.

And yet "Uncle" Jerry was a man born out of time and out of place. Fate had given him the qualities which make a scholar, but had limited his opportunities to the lonely farm where for forty years he had lived with Hannah Perkins, his childless wife, at the time when the present chapter of his history begins.

"Uncle" Jerry's only opportunity for "book larnin'" had been the district school. Educators are accustomed to say, in these days of liberal culture, that no boy or girl who truly desires a university training will be denied it. This may be true, but it was certainly not the case when Jerry Carleton was a boy. It was hard to wrest a living for a family of eleven children from a rocky hillside farm in New England. Uncle Jerry numbered one in such a family. When he was born the world spelled the word "toil" to him in large letters, — and it never spelled any other. Uncle Jerry's hard hands and grizzled face showed that he had mastered its lesson.

Yet from his earliest days he struggled with the problem of existence — not the mere existence of bread and butter, but the knotty equation which God seems to have set before mankind, and which centuries of thought have brought no nearer a solution. With it this New England peasant grappled hard. He was kindly, and his researches mellowed him from year to year, — as all genuine research in philosophy molds the mind into

beautiful perfection of character. There were always plenty to eat and plenty to wear in his home, but all the rest went into books. Uncle Jerry knew Plato and Socrates. He thoroughly understood the Stoics and the Peripatetics. He was versed in Huxley, Spencer, and Darwin, and he had plumbed the deep bottom of the German school. For when the harvests were over and the winter plowing had been done, he did not spend his time in the village store. As a bear hibernates on his nest of leaves, in the depths of his cave, Uncle Jerry for two decades had passed the winter buried in an atmosphere of lofty thought.

When he was old, and his mind was past its prime, he was ready for more fanciful thinking, and then his misfortunes began. The majority of people are wont to look with commiseration on those who become enmeshed in the esoteric philosophy of the Theosophists. Jerry Carleton came to this from Swedenborg, which had already worn several pounds of flesh from the bones of his poor wife, Hannah. But when the teachings of Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant came into that lonely New England household, Hannah Carleton's cup filled and ran over. Now Uncle Jerry — like all philosophers — was pleased to discuss his theories vocally, and for many winters he had rehearsed his ideas to Hannah as she sat silently, in the ingle nook, with her knitting. She had stood it well. She herself never had any opinions, and consequently she never said a word. But when the shadow of the Theosophic specter crossed her threshold she began to quake.

"Yer see, Hannah," her husband began one evening, "the hull idee rests on the proposition thet God in ther beginnin' created a certain number o' souls; an' in course o' time, ef they behave therselves, they'll all be promoted to the highest estate. *But* ef they don't behave, why, then they'll be debased and *re*incarnated inter an'mals sech ez pigs, an' hosses, cows — an' mebbe hens! Now the more I look inter this idee, the more I'm impressed with the possibility of its truth. I've be'n kinder lookin' inter ther faces of some of my stock, an' I begin ter see signs of the folkses who has died here'bouts during the past few years. Some of 'em I never took a likin' ter! — and ef it's so I ain't a-goin' ter hev 'em 'round."

One of the things which Uncle Jerry prided himself on was his "stock," — a generic term for all the live things on the farm. Hannah knew that he had been extravagant in selecting fine breeds, and she furthermore knew that if he took a dislike to them, he would not have them about. That would mean a heavy loss, for no one in the region would be willing to pay him what they were worth.

Thus every night when her husband sat down to ruminate over his books, or would settle back in his chair, deeply thinking, she was in a deadly fear lest his new theory should assert itself in action.

It was not long before she found that her anxiety was well grounded. One evening, after a long silence, the old man suddenly burst into conversation.

"You remember Susan Ricker, don't yer, Hannah? Let's see, she died three years ago, come January. She wuz a pizen-minded critter, an' ef I ever hated a human bein' she wuz the one. Now, I've be'n a-lookin' it up, and I find that my brindle heifer wuz born the night she died. She's alluz be'n ez contr'y ez a woman, an' I've pretty near come ter ther conclusion thet I'll not hev her about my farm. Why, I cudn't enjoy a moment ef I supposed thet Susan Ricker hed be'n reincarnated, and wuz a-livin' on my fodder, arter all she'd done ter us. Ef I see many more signs sech ez I surmise I seen, I'll git rid o' her ef I *hev* ter give 'er away."

The animal under consideration was an excellent cow. She was in her prime, and gave good milk and in large quantity. To lose her would make a large difference in the output of the butter the farm produced. This was the only money that Hannah Carleton could call her own. If the cow was lost there would be so much less. She was also a full-blooded animal, and her value was much above that of ordinary cattle. But if she was to be sold at this season, she would hardly bring half her value. The next few days were full of foreboding to Hannah, and as it happened, not without reason. A few evenings later Uncle Jerry entered upon another disquisition on this particular animal.

"You remember, Hannah," he began, "how Susan Ricker used ter toss thet ole head o' hers? Wall, ez sure ez I'm a-sittin'

here, thet brindle heifer o' mine has just the same toss o' *her* head! But thet ain't all. She don't seem ter be sat'sfied with anythin' I give her. She jest looks at me, and I kin see ez true ez any'thin' that sassy smirk o' Susan Ricker. I've made up my mind thet I'll not hev her on this place another day. I've tol' Lem Nutter thet he can hev her at almost any price, an' he's a-comin' ter-morrer, an' I jest guess she'll not spend another night on this place."

And such proved to be the case. A bargain was made the next day, and the happy purchaser bragged over his acquisition the same evening down in the village store.

"Kinder seems ter me," he said, "thet Uncle Jerry Carleton's losin' his senses. I've alluz 'blieved so much readin' would do him up. Wall, he sold me his three-year-old brindle heifer for thirty-five dollars, ter-day, an' she would be cheap at twice the sum. Why, she tuk one o' ther premiums at the county fair las' fall, an' I wudn't swop her for any cow I know in this town."

Hannah Carleton saw many little things that she had intended to purchase for her home vanish when her favorite cow departed that afternoon. But she said nothing, and went about her duties with a grave face. Uncle Jerry expressed his great relief over his bargain.

"I'd a-killed her myself, only I wuz afraid she'd be reincarnated inter something better, for I must own thet she wuz a-doin' mighty good work; and yer know thet if a soul begins ter improve, she's bound ter be promoted the nex' time she dies."

The stock on Jerry's farm underwent a close scrutiny that winter, and a few weeks later he had formed some severe conclusions from their conduct. These he voiced in his after-supper disquisitions to his wife.

"Yer know, Hannah," he began one evening, "thet when a pusson is real hoggish, he nat'rally becomes a hog when he dies. Wall, you remember Hi Andrews, who died in ther fall? He wuz one o' the meanest men this town ever hed. Folkses sed he wuz too mean ter draw breath, an' so he died. He robbed all o' his rel'tives an cheated ev'rybody when he knew he cudn't be found out. Wall, I've noticed a marked resemblance between our pig and Hi Andrews, an' I'm cert'nly averse ter eatin' sausages

made o' him. But I'm sure I don't want ter hev him killed, for if he should appear on earth again, he wud be a curse to any place where he happened ter land. He might become a German or a Chinee, or anythin'; but I think too much o' ther human species ter want ter perpetuate him. I've made up my mind ter let thet pig live jest ez long ez he wants ter. It may be kinder hard not ter hev any fresh pork, or sausages an' ham, but I'd a good sight rather go without than feed on such a blamed ole skinflint!"

Thus did Hannah see vanish one of her most cherished pleasures, that of hog-killing time, when there was a taste of fresh meat, — quite a rarity in her household. She spent her next week in fear and trembling, wondering where her husband's strange hobby would land him next. As it happened, he had a mare of which he was very fond. She was an excellent piece of horse flesh, and was of good Hambletonian stock. She was the only horse on the place, and one, at least, was indispensable. She became the next victim of Uncle Jerry's Theosophic philosophy, and her undoing came about as follows.

"I've never gotten over the sad end of Mary Louise Hastings," observed Uncle Jerry. Hannah prepared for the worst. "I know, of course, thet she went wrong, and I know thet she'll hev ter be degraded inter some an'mal; but I hev a strong feelin' in her favor, and, livin' or dead, I'd alluz do her a kindness. Now our mare, Bessie, is the exact image of Mary Louise. She hez them same innercent eyes, and she's jest as docile an' trac'ble ez she wuz. Then when she's harnessed up she's for all the world Mary Louise all over again. Now ef I kin be o' any use in helpin' the poor girl along, I'm a-goin' ter do it. So I've concluded I'll shoot Bessie, and release Mary Louise for somethin' higher."

Hannah groaned within herself. Years of experience with her kindly but philosophic husband had taught her that resistance was of no avail. Four winters before she had been taught the philosophy of non-resistance, and by dint of hard experience she knew it was useless to oppose. She had hard work to keep back the tears, for she saw that property worth, at least, two hundred dollars, was doomed, and well she knew their slender resources.

She suggested that a trade might be made, but Uncle Jerry vowed he would give Bessie into no man's hands; and then, besides, it was his duty to release the soul of Mary Louise.

The farm had now lost a valuable cow and a horse, and the household was to be denied its share of fresh pork. Mrs. Carleton was at her wits' end. Vainly she tried to think of some means by which she might win away her husband from this destructive "fad" of Theosophy. She was a good Christian woman, and was a regular attendant at the village church. She knew of no new philosophy which she could substitute for that which was ruining her husband. She at last decided to consult her clergyman.

"Your husband is, indeed, sadly misled," the good man said; "and while I cannot but admire his willingness to make these sacrifices, I can readily see that he is making a mistake which is costing him dear. I really can see no way out of it, and he seems to have exhausted the whole realm of philosophy. But I'll think this matter over, and if I can, I'll gladly help you. Come to me in a few days."

In the meantime Hannah's husband had been making new discoveries. He had a yoke of oxen which had taken the first prize at the county fair for two years running. It would certainly be a difficult matter to imagine what he could discover about these innocent beasts to lead him to part with them. But, as we have discovered, virtues and vices counted for little in the midst of his vagaries.

That evening he began again on the dreaded subject. "I've discovered that them Holcomb twins, who died at ther poor farm six winters ago, hev be'n reincarnated inter my yoke o' red oxen. Yer see thet them oxen is matched ter a day, and it is a fac', Hannah, thet they's born the very day those two ole fellers died. You'll prob'ly recall thet it was considered quite a coincidence thet they died the same day. Wall, thet's all explained now, fer yer see they lived sech a lazy life thet it was necessary ter degrade 'em. Now ther want no use in them two men ever bein' poor. They hed money ter start with; but they simply *wudn't work*. They wuz for all the world like 'dumb, driven cattle.' When they wuz drove, they would do a little job to earn a meal. Now I never hed anythin' special against 'em, only I shall never

tek any comfort with 'em around. I'm mighty sure thet *I* don't want ter feel thet I'm drivin' them Holcomb twins. So I'm jest a-goin' ter tek what I kin git for 'em, and they'll be put up ter auction in a few days. I know it is hardly a good time ter sell 'em, but I shall hev ter do it. I should never hev any peace if I felt I hed them two ole men hitched up in my barn."

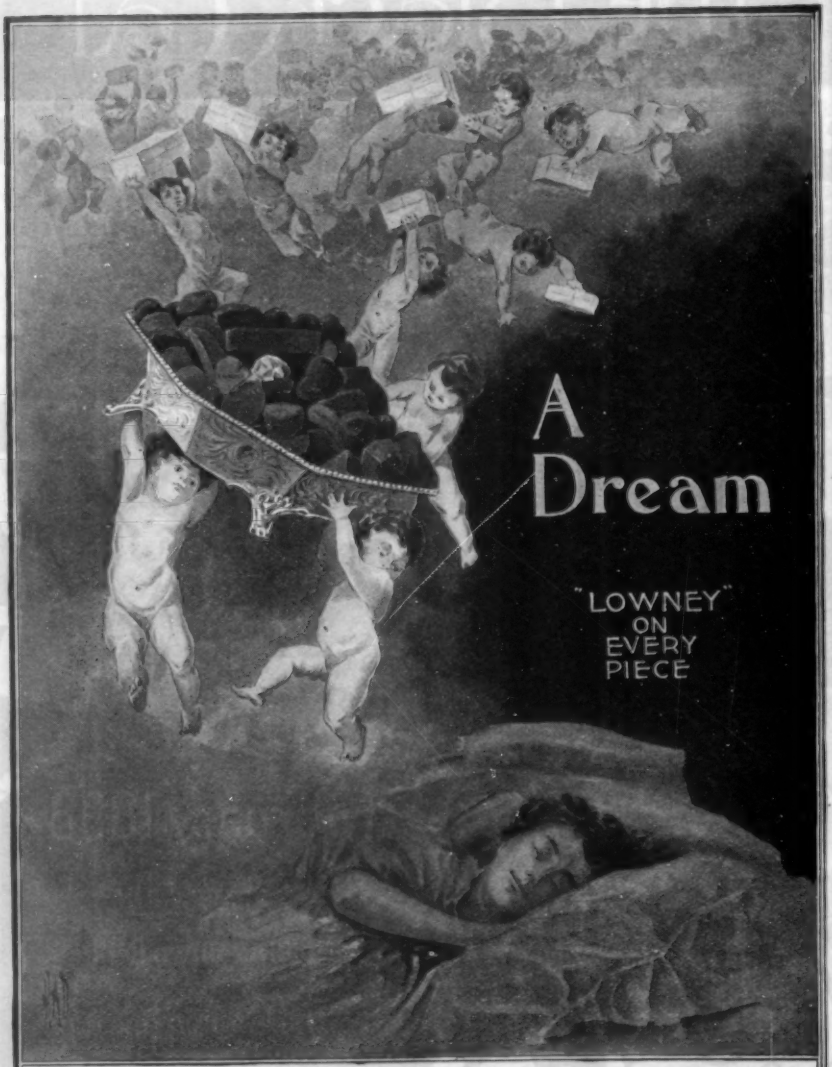
Before the end of the week the "twins" were knocked down for about half their value.

But the good clergyman was about to come to the rescue. He was a kind man, and was really concerned when any of his flock were in trouble. He had thought of many things, but as there seemed to be no new fields of philosophy for Uncle Jerry to explore, he had a difficult task. One evening, as he was pondering over this matter, he had an inspiration. He did not wait for Mrs. Carleton to come to him, but, in the same minute the idea was born, started for her home.

He knew that Jerry Carleton was well versed in all philosophies. Why not engage him to give a course of weekly lectures during the winter? He believed he was safe in offering him ten dollars for each evening. At all events he would make the attempt, and perhaps this would divert the mind so bent on the doctrines of Madame Blavatsky. He unfolded his plan, and it was agreed that he should make the proposition to Uncle Jerry. He was fortunate in meeting the old man in the village the next day. That night Hannah noticed the delight in her husband's face.

"Wall, Hannah, I've never expected to become famous; but it seems thet some folkses think I know somethin', arter all. Now what do yer think thet our minister hez a-be'n a-proposin'? Wall, I'll tell yer. He wants me ter deliver ten lectures on Greek philosophy. Now, I studied that pretty clost for two winters, and even ef it is ten years ago, I kin remember all the sâyin's of them ole fellers as well as ef it wuz only yisterday. I tol' the dominie that I wuz no great speaker, but I'd guess I'd like ter try, — an' I'm a-goin' ter. That money'll do us a sight o' good, for we've hed ter suffer a good deal fer the sake of ther truth this winter. But I kinder guess we've rooted out all the reincarnation we hev on this farm."

In this way the flock of poultry and the rest of the cows on the Carleton farm were saved. Uncle Jerry spent his evenings in the labored effort of writing his lectures. They proved a great success, and there is one New England town where there is an unusual knowledge of the Greek philosophers. When another winter comes around Uncle Jerry is going to take up another topic, and the snows of many more will fall before he once more reaches the modern doctrine of Theosophy.



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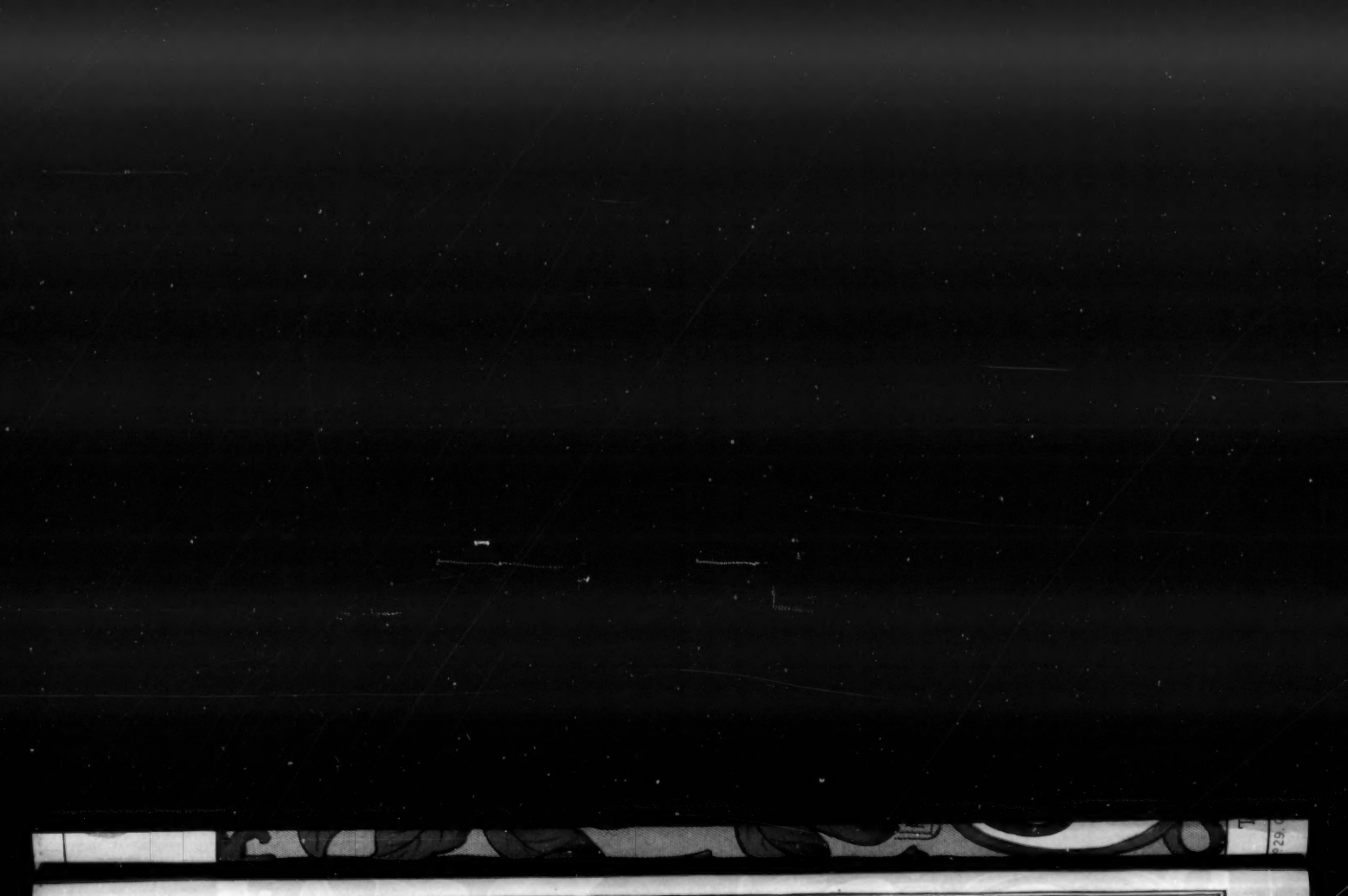
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